



Florida House of Representatives
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PERSPECTIVE ON THE STATE BUDGET
Fiscal Year 2010-11

Regarding Florida House Appropriations Proposals – March 19, 2010

This morning, the House Appropriations Council published a series of budget bills that deserve significant public review to ensure that they are truly reflective of the priorities of Floridians.

Florida House Democratic Caucus members are confident that Floridians want a state spending plan that doesn't raise taxes and fees on working families and small businesses. We believe Floridians want economic growth, job creation and a budget that protects public education, vital health care programs and other essential state services.

At first glance, the House Republican leadership appears to be offering a budget in contrast to the one submitted by Governor Charlie Crist. The preliminary House recommendation drains trust funds, fails to increase state spending on education but substantially increases the tuition that students and parents pay for college and university costs. It makes cuts in key healthcare programs, doesn't restart the Florida Forever environmental program, and makes other risky decisions.

Florida House Democrats are listening to the people. We know that most families can't afford to pay higher taxes. That's why we think it is crucial that the Fiscal Year 2010-11 state budget is fiscally responsible; attacks waste, fraud and abuse; makes good use of available federal stimulus funds; and avoids cuts that could have long-term negative cost consequences for taxpayers.

After being solidly in charge of Florida government for 12 years, Republicans have left our state in a deep fiscal mess. They made the wrong choices for Floridians last year. They raised taxes and fees on small businesses and the middle class. They made irresponsible budget cuts. And they raided trust funds dedicated to important public causes, such as children's health and conservation land purchases. This year, we are hoping that the majority party fashions a better state budget for Florida's families and businesses.

The remainder of this document highlights several items we have identified in the House budget proposals released today that will be closely reviewed by Florida House Democratic Caucus members in the remainder of the 2010 legislative session.

Additionally, because your impressions matter and because you deserve to be heard by elected officials, we are providing the following web site link to take you to various 2010 appropriations documents provided by the Florida House of Representatives.

<http://tinyurl.com/y9a7xd3>

The following are items of concern in the preliminary House budget bills:

PREK – 12 EDUCATION:

- Raids \$58 million from **voluntary Prekindergarten** and shifts those dollars to K-12 funding.
- **Per-Student Funding Cut.** The FEFP (Florida Education Finance Program) would see a \$31 per student cut from the current \$6,866 per student funding level.

STATE UNIVERSITIES AND PRIVATE COLLEGES:

- **Tuition Hike of up to 15 percent.** The budget calls for an 8-percent increase in all colleges and universities statewide, and an additional 7-percent hike where approved by university oversight boards.

HEALTH CARE:

- Cuts \$309 million in payments to **health care providers** at nursing homes, hospitals, pharmacies, and other medical clinics.
- Cuts by nearly half the “**independent living**” monthly stipend for Florida's foster-care youth from about \$1,300 a month to \$675/month.
- Cuts **health education programs** by \$9.7 million.

- Eliminates health benefits for certain **pregnant women** in families just above the federal poverty level.
- Cuts \$4.7 million from “**Healthy Start**” programs that support pregnant women and babies.

ENVIRONMENT:

- **Fails to restart Florida Forever and Everglades Restoration.** By contrast, Governor Crist recommends \$50 million to Florida Forever, and \$50 million for Everglades restoration.

TRANSPORTATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

- Cuts \$21 million from **public libraries**.
- State **transportation work program** cuts.
- Reduces funding for **affordable housing** programs.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE:

- Cuts \$2 million from **public defenders**.
- Cuts \$1 million from **state attorneys**.
- Reduces funding for **community intervention programs** run by the Department of Juvenile Justice.

GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS:

- Eliminates funding for the Office of Supplier Diversity, the Commission on Disabilities, and the Office of Government Efficiency.
- Cuts to state worker salaries and retiree benefits.

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